

New York Illustrated

A HOME WEEKLY

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Vol. VII. NEW YORK, JANUARY 13, 1877. No. 357.

YES!

BY EREN E. HENFORD.

Oh, sweet, red-rose, let your lips unclose,
Did you hear what she said last night?
I saw your face, in its sweet, bright grace,
Lean down to the lilies white,
And I think you heard each whispered word,
For the wind laughed out in glee,
And a bird sang low to his mate in dreams,
Of the dream that had come to me.
Each drooping lid with its fringes hid
The blue of her eyes from me,
But I saw the red of her cheeks o'erspread
The face that was fair to see.
And her thoughts I read at the words I said
In the red-rose flush on her cheek;
And I knew full well what her heart would say
Ere I heard my darling speak.
Then the wind sang sweet at the lilies' feet—
Sung tenderly, soft and low:
And the roses' music, in the purple dusk,
Dropped into their cups of snow.
And, "Oh, love of mine! I ask some sign
Of the love that your cheeks confess!"
Then her red lips stirred with one low, sweet
word,
And that word! that word was "Yes!"

The Red Cross;

OR,

The Mystery of Warren-Guilderland.

A ROMANCE OF THE ACCURSED COINS.

BY GRACE MORTIMER.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE HAREM.

AFTER two days and nights of hard riding, with short seasons of rest between, Timour-Emad and his band, with the American lady in their midst, approached the stronghold of their tribe.

This Bedouin encampment had been pitched within the tolerably well-preserved walls of an Arab village, which they had laid waste some time previously, and as the location was both secure and convenient, being behind a wall, and in a "wady" or hollow place, where water was abundant, these restless marauders had not yet grown tired of and forsaken it for some fresh field.

The band approached, riding at full gallop as they neared the encampment, and uttering shrill, resonant shouts of victory; and, midnight though it was, a horde of villainous-looking Bedouins rushed out of the breach in the wall which served as town gate, and was guarded by a picked patrol, and swarming round their victorious chief, kissing the feet, garments, and hand he carelessly extended them, or prostrating themselves under his snorting steed's hoofs, to be stolidly ridden over by the haughty conqueror—vied with each other in the ardor of their welcome. Meanwhile the rest of the band were being dragged from their horses, embraced and passed from hand to hand, with shouts of adulation and welcome, mingled with inquiries where the others were, where the spoil was, etc., etc.

It was a strange enough scene for the terrified eyes of the far-traveled lady; the slight eminence behind the wall was occupied by a host of "krums" or tents, whose dingy brown was transformed into crimson by the red flare of the rising moon, while, conspicuously placed upon the apex of the gentle eminence, stood the *beit-el-shar*—the khalfa's tent, distinguishable by its position, its handsome white and scarlet stripes, and by the glittering spear thrust into the loose soil in front of it, with the standard of the tribe fluttering from its head.

As the cortège swept through the swarming throngs toward this point, a bevy of women, closely veiled from head to foot, and singing a wild sort of victory hymn, to which they kept time with their feet, approached, surrounded the sheik and his captive, lifted the latter bodily from her saddle, and bore her in their arms within the tent, into its inner compartment, the "harem."

Here these dark, soft-eyed, melancholy-looking beings, many of them evidently themselves the spoil of former conquests, and all the slavish ministrants to the savage voluptuousness of their rude lord, applied themselves, with eager zest, to the interesting task of preparing the new victim for the sacrifice, chattering among themselves in their soft, sibilant tongue, of which she understood not one word, while they deftly removed her dust-stained garments, laved her exhausted person in deliciously perfumed waters, thrilled their long fingers through her glittering, gold-colored tresses, to free it from the sand of the desert, and to charge it with a rich and fragrant unguent; until, under their delicate brown, softly-moving hands, their melancholy eastern eyes, and monotonous whisperings, the weary captive fell fast asleep.

When she once more looked up, at a loss for a moment to account for her strange surroundings, a lurid, breathless, hushed dawn was penetrating its blood-red rays through the many interstices of her shelter, and the confused sounds of a savage host awaking to their daily life, came to her startled ear like the buzzing of a mighty hive.

She raised herself to her elbow and sent her terrified glance around the interior of the tent, then over her own person, with wonder and dismay unexpressed.

As to the former, it was adorned with all the barbaric splendor procurable through imperial robbery; upon the walls glistened a fine array of Arab weapons, tastefully set off by the rich folds of stolen scarfs and shawls of oriental looms; a brilliantly-dyed carpet of morocco covered the bare ground; the ran upon which she reclined, was a pile of velvet tiger skins, with cushions of delicately wrought needle-work on softest silk; and, separated only by the few feet of floor between them, she beheld the emir reclining upon another divan, the mate of her own, his eyes fastened in dreamy raptures upon his captive, while he smoked his *maghazeh*, keeping up a gentle pattering noise in the "kush" — a large, handsomely-cut glass bottle, inlaid with gold, filled with perfumed water, with a long green and gold tube which coiled like a serpent across the floor.

As to Cordelia's own person, she gazed in won-



"Emir, by this seal I demand your protection, and if you refuse it me—"

der and distress at its splendid orientalism; the fabrics were costly and beautiful in the extreme, the hues rich with dashes of gold and scarlet, but, while her head was delicately veiled in a sweeping veil of silver tissue, and her hair strung with glittering coins and immense gems, her bosom was exposed even more liberally than it would have been at a royal reception at the English court.

Perceiving her to have awaked from her long sleep of exhaustion, Timour-Emad, signing her silently to draw her veil close, clasped his hands loudly, and, instantly, two Arab servants entered, bearing a little polygonal stool, and a tray of lacquer work, in which were socketed two tiny porcelain cups, from which rose the fragrant steam of Turkish coffee. These objects they placed upon the ground between the divans, vanished again, and re-appeared, the one with a golden basin, the other with a golden ewer; and, kneeling before the chief, poured water upon his hands, drying them afterward with a damask napkin. This ceremony was performed for the captive immediately after, the attendants not daring to glance at her. They then offered a cup to each, also a gilded bowl filled with a curious pasty mass, which Cordelia recognized as the favorite Arabian dish of rice, wheat, beans, and oil.

As she could not at once prevail upon herself to touch the proffered hospitalities of her captor, he said, in his careful English: "Damsel, eat, I pray thee; drink, then we shall be as kindred, and no strangers. The salt of brotherhood leaves not the heart of a Bedouin. Eat, and be at peace."

After a moment's reflection, she compelled herself to accept the significant courtesy, and having satisfied her hunger, which, in spite of her imminent position, the long ride, with its brief pauses for refreshment, had sharpened, she felt herself safer from the violence of the emir.

The symbolic ceremony over, the attendants glided out with the utensils, re-appearing with the basin and ewer, only to vanish once more like automatic figures, without casting a single curious glance at their master's latest favorite.

And now came the moment so long mercifully delayed, when the despot of the desert, who had never yet been withstood by any living thing that lay in his power, and the delicately-nurtured American lady, who had never yet been exposed to the violence of so much as a rough word, confronted each other, with a point at issue between them. In all the length of that terrible ride, Cordelia had not yet had one opportunity to examine the sign which she believed Masudi to have imprinted upon her arm. She was thinking of it now, with mingled hope and doubt, wondering what influence it was to exert upon her opponent, when the moment came for her to reveal it.

She was also lifting up her quaking heart to Heaven for aid and courage to uphold her through the dreaded scene; and, unconsciously, the expression of her face became so lofty, calm, and unapproachably pure, that her savage lover hesitated in his rude court, overawed.

In the dead hush, preoccupied as the pair were, the yellow glare of the morning light that struggled through the interstices of the tent, with a certain dry, sulphurous heat and dead hush in the atmosphere, suddenly occurred to Cordelia, who had never endured such utter stagnation in her passage through climates even more tropical, and while it explained to her the depth and duration of her late slumbers, caused depth and emotion of vague uneasiness that was rather unexpected under the circumstances. Almost instant upon this thought, came such a wild, wailing, unearthly cry—so long, so agonizing, that she grew white with nameless fear, and started to her feet. Timour-Emad's dark, languorous face sharpened and hardened as he heard it; he, too, arose, and stepping to the opening of the tent, swept aside the heavy curtain of goat's hair and looked out over the city of conical tents, to the vast rolling sand-stepped, over which the sky loomed, thickly burdened with storm clouds.

"Tis the howl of the jackals; they flee before

the approaching simoom," exclaimed the emir, wishing to reassure her, that the preoccupation of fear might not interfere with the course of his love-making.

Something in the horizon seemed to rivet his hawk eye; he looked long and attentively at it. Cordelia, venturing to steal a hasty glance over his shoulder, saw something like a little cloud skimming over the yellow sea, and, by the flash which broke from it, knew it for a company of armed riders, galloping toward the shelter of Timour-Emad's encampment ere the storm-clouds should burst upon them.

Her courage rose.

"These strangers will afford a diversion, which may shield me," she mused, "and the storm may do the rest."

The khalfa returned to his love-making with a resolute air.

"Damsel," said he, "thou art fairer than all the women who have been before thee, and none shall come after thee who is worthy to tie the golden Moon, because that thy head is as the gold of Ophir, and thy face as the white disk of the moon. Be of good cheer, fair Frankish maiden; thou hast found grace in the eyes of the great djed, Timour-Emad; thou shalt be his chief wife, before all the women of his harem. Come hither, Golden Moon."

She checked his fiery ardor with a look, and a proud wave of her hand.

"Emir," she returned, icily, "beware how you insult me. I am your captive, you know why—for my father's sake, not from love of you. In my land, a brave man would scorn to demand the duty of a woman who loved him not. Keep me in captivity forever, if you like, but do not expect me ever to consent to be your wife."

For a moment he was silent, his hot heart filling with bitter disappointment and mortification. He had begun to delude himself with the hope that he could bend to his will this gold-haired, angel-faced, proud-eyed princess of the Franks; that she would ere long give him love for love; but under those gentle, pitiless words, and those luminous, fearless, half-contemptuous eyes, his hope died in wrath and pain. It was with a stain of fiercer fire burning on his tawny cheek, and a new ring in his menacing tones, that he cried:

"Golden Moon forgets that she is the spoil of the conqueror, won him by his spear, and by his saber—his to kill or to save alive—to degrade or to honor. Shall the conqueror then kneel to his captive, suing for what is his by right of warfare? Shall not the captive kneel to her conqueror, praying him to lift her to the high estate of chiefest sultana of his tent? Yea, and as God liveth, many as fair have sued in vain!" and again he approached her, and this time would not be frowned away, but seized her in his brawny arms.

"Stop!" she cried, in a thrilling tone of command.

Taken by surprise, he released her.

Retreating to the opposite side of the tent, she suddenly possessed herself of a small Eastern dagger, which had caught her eye as the interview progressed and sweeping back the wide silken sleeve of her Eastern dress, so that the whole of her white arm was visible up to that spot upon which Masudi had imprinted the as yet unknown symbol which was to save her in her darkest need, made as if by the blade of her own bosom, while she exclaimed, vehemently:

"Emir, by this seal, I demand your protection, and swear by my God that if you refuse it me, I shall escape your insulting love by death!"

Timour-Emad stood a moment as if stricken dumb, his eyes fastened upon the mark which was now revealed on the glistening satin of her arm—awfully. A slight shudder then passed over him; he parted his thin lips in a malignant, biting, mocking smile, his white teeth clicking ominously, and with the blackest blood in his savage heart boiling up under the utterly unlooked-for revelation, his words rolled forth,

raging and impetuous as the howl of the furious tiger.

"What!" he yelled, while the same long, tortured wail came again from the desert, as the jackals fled before the coming tempest, and the jingling of the advancing horsemen rung nearer as the strangers swept into the city of refuge—"what! hath my brother Masudi only played the traitor unto me, to send into my tent—to tempt his brother, and to spy out the weakness of the land—his wife? His wife, marked with the blue scarabæus of betrothal—his favorite queen, the delight of his eyes, whom, to touch, were the blackest perjury of brother to brother! Now, as God and His Prophet live, I shall avenge myself upon this my treacherous brother. Yea, and upon thee also, thou dissembler," and with a howl of ungovernable fury, he tore a saber from its rest on the wall, and throwing himself upon the horrified lady, hurled her to her knees, and flashed the glittering blade above her head in deadly menace.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ARAB RIVALS.

In that supreme moment, while the imperial purple eyes of the doomed lady met with cold contempt and haunting reproach the bloodshot glare of the infuriated savage, a sudden, loud, tumultuous shout came from the people without—the "Allah il Allah" of a salutation, or an attack.

At the first sound of it, the emir dashed aside his weapon and released his intended victim with a curse full of Moslem blasphemy, and, as if he felt ashamed of himself for his momentary impulse against the guest with whom he had so lately eaten the sacred salt of hospitality, strode instantly from her presence.

Cordelia kept her knees, a heavenly radiance upon her; she was returning God humble thanks for His intervention on her behalf.

Next instant, the reiterated shouts of the multitude took form in her arrested ears, and, to her mingled joy and anxiety, she recognized the Arabian pronunciation of the one word, "Masudi!"

Her strange friend had come to her aid.

She examined the mark on her arm. Sure enough, upon the ivory surface was distinctly traced, in hair-like lines, the form of the sacred beetle of the East, the scarabæus, as it tattooed, in brilliant blue.

Timour-Emad had called it the seal of marriage, or betrothal; she was, by its testimony, the property of the man who was now in the camp of his duped ally, Timour-Emad.

What was to be the upshot of these complicated circumstances?

Suppose Masudi should play her false, as he had played the traitor to his brother emir? Suppose he should claim her, defying her to disprove the testimony of the sign upon her arm?

But no—she could not recall the expression of Masudi's eye as it looked into her own in that parting moment, and doubt his integrity. He was trustworthy; of that she felt assured, and she awaited the result of his appearance among the legions of his ally, whom he had so bitterly angered, with what patience and confidence she could muster.

"As long as I possess this," murmured she, resolutely thrusting the dagger into her gash, "I am personally safe; I trust I have heroism enough to plunge it into my own heart in defense of my honor, although—thanks to my civilized training—I should find it impossible to turn it against another's."

As she mused thus, the tumult without, the mingled clamor of shouted salutation, shrieking songs of welcome, chattering tongues, and clashing of barbaric instruments of music abruptly stopped; there was a season of dead silence, then a great cry, and the terrible clang of weapons drawn from their sheaths.

Cordelia listened in horror. Had Timour-Emad fallen upon his armed brother Masudi? And if he had, and it should be Masudi's fate to fall, what had she to look for?

Shuddering and sickening, Cordelia addressed herself to prayer.

The formidable sounds continued and increased in terror; they approached nearer and nearer, and culminated in two voices raised in bitter dispute, which entered the outer compartment of the sheik's marquee.

In the indignant accents of one of these voices, Cordelia easily recognized Timour-Emad's; but the astonished and provoked voice that answered, was strange to her ears. Before she had done noting this fact, a dark hand swept aside the curtain, and two sheiks burst into her astonished presence.

Timour-Emad, gesticulating wildly, while he seemed to invoke the aid of all his gods, and—a stranger, whose first glance at the unveiled beauty of the captive, struck him dumb. Confused and shrinking before the broad gaze of the excited pair, Cordelia could yet command herself sufficiently to rise and face them with stately rebuke.

"Why this intrusion, chief?" she demanded, coldly. "Is this the courtesy you extend to her who has eaten of your salt?"

The stranger, whose burning eyes were fixed upon the blue scarabæus in a species of fascination, hearing those delicate accents uttered in the most musical voice in the world, began to examine her from head to foot, with quickly kindled admiration and covetousness. As for Timour-Emad, he seemed to be slowly recovering from a great astonishment, and to be oppressed with the greatness of some new thought. Approaching his captive, he said, in his careful English:

"What sayest thou, damsels sealed with Masudi's betrothal sign—is this thy lord, Masudi?"

What did he mean? The man before her was certainly not the Masudi who had impressed that sign upon her arm!

As she hesitated, bewildered and fearing to speak, the stranger also drew near her, and she read, with sickening apprehension, the fervid admiration of his looks, and the gradual resolve which crept into his envious eye.

"Hold thy peace, maiden!" exclaimed he, imperiously. "It becometh not the woman to speak in the presence of her lord. By the Law and the Prophets, Timour-Emad, brother of Masudi—he who met thee in the desert, and called himself by my name—hath dealt deceitfully with thee, is an impostor, not Masudi; and this woman, sealed with the beetle of betrothal, is mine!"

This astounding declaration blanched the cheeks of the captive, and called a dark scowl to the face of the conquering chief.

Evidently he did not believe his visitor's statement—evidently he was just sufficiently enamored of his beautiful captive to welcome with joy any loop-hole through which he might snatch her from another's possession.

"Damsel, is this true?" demanded he, obstinately addressing her, in spite of his visitor's haughty remonstrance. "Hast thou ever before beheld this man, who, wearing not the face of that Masudi who succored thee on the plain, yet claims thee as the queen of his *beit-el-shar*?"

Trembling, as she read the burning gaze with which the pseudo-Masudi regarded her, and infinitely preferring the tender mercies of the middle-aged, amiable, and noble-looking Timour-Emad to those of this younger and more brutal chief, Cordelia cried, emphatically:

"I know nothing of this man, nor he of me. We are strangers!"

Timour-Emad uttered an exultant cry.

"Lo, my brother!" said he, with affected politeness, "the woman denies thee; it is not that thou hast mistaken her for some other woman of thy tent, even more comely than she?"

"The woman hath fled from me," answered the stranger, calmly. "She lies, unto me, brother. Woman, hold thy peace, lest I deal with thee as thou deservest at my hands. My brother, thou hast been the sport of treachery and falsehood. He who called himself thy brother and ally—the great Emir Masudi—was surely that base slave who assisted the flight of this my newly-betrothed queen. But all is well. Allah hath led my steps hither just in time to claim my own ere thou hast in thy ignorance possessed thyself of it. The woman is safe; the true Emir Masudi is here; his people are with thy people. All is well, God and his Prophet be praised!"

This serene and devout harangue failed to carry the chief auditor along with it. Timour-Emad's admiration for his fair captive augmented a thousand fold as his chances for possession dwindled away; he felt an inner conviction that his plausible brother was swindling him out of a captive he had not the smallest right to, though he could not prove it, and his untolerant passions naturally chafed against the intolerable idea of being cheated out of the finest woman he had ever beheld by this, his long-abhorred, but newly-allied brother robber, a younger man than himself, with fewer followers, and more conquests to boast of.

Therefore, it was with rather a formidable darkening of the lean Arab visage that he answered:

"My brother hath said; now, who are his sureties? How are Timour-Emad and his people to assure themselves that thou art the true Masudi, and no impostor, and that the other was naught?"

"Darest thou to cast doubt in the teeth of the king-vulture of the plain?" flashed the young chief, laying his richly-bejeweled hand upon the hilt of his saber. "What! dost thou, in thine own *beit-el-shar*, meet this thy newly-allied brother, the mighty Masudi—with insulting doubts, when he cometh unto thee with his people behind him, to ratify the bonds of our alliance? Inshallah, thou dog of a renegade from the sacred customs of our race, set now thy men in array against my men—spear for spear, and a saber for a saber—and to the victor be the name of chief of both tribes be given; and let Allah judge between thee and me!" And, with a volley of furious Arab oaths, and the foam of white upon his lips, the incensed Masudi broke from the tent, and anon was heard shouting to his men, ordering them to arm!

For a moment Timour-Emad hesitated, and passing thought of the welfare of his people occurred to him; but a glance at the lovely and anxious face of his captive decided him. Should he permit such beauty to grace any other tent than his own, now that he had a chance to fight for the prize? What were the lives of his men worth in comparison with this great triumph?

He, too, strode from her presence, and instantly the whole encampment was ringing with



"GOD'S ACRE."

BY MRS. ADDIE D. ROLLSTON.

Here sleep within this hallowed ground
The old, the young, the grave, the gay,
Deaf to the wailing song of spring,
Blind to the golden light of day,
Forever through the drooping boughs
Of gloomy cypress comes the moan
Of sweeping winds, that ever tell
Their whispers in an undertone.
The very skies seem full of woe,
Even though they shine with radiance fair,
And flowers that blossom brightly here
A sad, sweet beauty ever wear!

I pause beside a tiny grave,
Sweet with the flowers of blushing spring,
Where violets lift their purple blooms,
And summer birds their matins sing.
A little hand seems stretching out
Across the mystic, dim Unknown,
And kisses warm from baby-lips
Seem with a thrill to meet my own!
Oh! violet eyes, forever sealed!
Oh! snowy hands, forever stilled!
There is an empty void where once
A little presence sweetly filled!

Here, gleaming whitely in the sun,
A marble column stands a mound,
Where slumbers one whose life was pure,
Whose generous deeds were once renowned.
But long ago the voice was hushed,
The lifted heart was laid to rest,
The weary hands, freed from life's toil,
Were folded on a pulseless breast!
And yet through long and bitter years,
Despite the grave that lay between,
One mourned with hopeless grief his loss,
And kept his memory fresh and green!

And here, within this oak-tree's shade,
Forgot, neglected and alone,
I find a sunken, nameless grave,
Unmarked by even the simplest stone.
And yet mayhap in some far home
A mother watched with hopeful eyes
The coming of a much-loved form
That in eternal stillness lies.
Watched till the heart grew sick with fear,
For words came not from lips grown dumb,
And ne'er again through twilight's gloom
The eager tread of feet will come!

And oh! the fond hopes buried here!
The radiant dreams that darkly fled,
When loved ones wept their bitter tears
Above the shrine of death and dread.
And some are left to walk life's way,
Who long with fierce and bitter pain
To rest with those that ne'er will walk
In any earthly path again!

Yet He who notes the sparrow's fall,
Looks down on every crime and land,
And guards with a father's love
The smallest creature of His hand!

And so when starry evening comes,
The calm, still twilight of the years
That endeth all life's pain and toil,
And covers loss and sorrow's tears;
It will be sweet to slumber here,
Where violet flowers shed their perfume rare,
And through the summer's leafy boughs
The sunlight falls with splendor fair.
Sweet then to lay each burden down,
The brooding cares that vexed us so,
And in eternal slumbers sweet
No earthly losses o'er to know!

Cecile's Two New Years'.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

OUTSIDE the snow was falling thickly, noiselessly; the branches of the trees were wrapped an inch or more deep in their cloaks of feathery whiteness, and the fall evergreens that seemed standing on guard on either side the entrance to the house, looked wondrously beautiful in their white and green array.

Far and near reigned the unbroken silence that comes with a veritable, old-fashioned snow-storm. No wind, no biting cold, and, as yet, no sound of sleigh-bells, that even in the village of Markham would ring merrily and constantly when the storm should cease, and the roads, piled two feet high, already, should "be broken."

Within the large double house on the main street—the house guarded so royally by the arrow-straight, majestic pines—the streaming lights from the windows that gleamed brightly even through the thickly-falling snow, gave token that there was pleasant comfort, at least, within. And there was—there could not fail of being happy hearts and sunny faces in the Hazleton household, for many reasons; chiefest of which was—on the morrow, the glad New Year, Cecile was to be married. Cecile, the youngest daughter, with her sweet, blue eyes, like a June sky, that had captivated more hearts than her betrothed's—the quiet, grave, gentlemanly man who was sitting opposite the grate, talking to Mr. Hazleton.

He was all of twenty years older than Cecile, John Duval was; and other people besides himself wondered how he ever had come to be so infatuated with the saucy, golden-haired Cecile, not yet nineteen.

Other people wondered with surprise—he himself with thrills of glad, worshipful joy, when ever he looked at the girl who, on the morrow, was to crown his life with perfection.

He had known her only a year, and that year had taught him the strength and depth of an affection he had never accredited himself with. A year of strange surprise on his part, at the first, when he found how the girl could sway him at her merest caprices. Then weeks and weeks of alternate hope and fear, lest he should not find favor in her sight—then such wild joy, such ecstasy of delight, when her own sweet, pouting lips had confessed she loved him.

He was perfectly content after that. He would not have changed places with a living man on earth; he waited so impatiently and expectantly for the time when he might take her in his arms, forever and ever his very own.

And now—this snowy, silent night—this New Year's eve was at hand; and the morrow, whether shrouded in snow clouds, or bathed in joyous sunshine, was his and Cecile's wedding day.

Every thing was in readiness; the bride's trunks were packed and standing in the hall. The dainty gray traveling suit in the wardrobe, and the gloves and kid boots were only awaiting the moment when Cecile should don them. In New York, miles away from the quiet little New Jersey village, the pleasant home was in readiness for the bride and groom at the very moment that John Duval sat by the glowing fire in Cecile's home, the fire in his own house was blazing and burning merrily in anticipation of his glad coming on the morrow.

He might have been thinking of that, or something equally pleasant, for the tender happiness on his face deepened, and a mute, adoring light leaped into his grave, earnest eyes, as the outer door closed and the parlor door opened, admitting Cecile—a tiny, graceful girl, with yellow-gold hair, starred with big snow-flakes, and cheeks of rare pinky freshness.

Duval looked at her, wonderingly; then anxiously.

"You haven't been out in this storm, Cecile! What if you should catch cold?"

She laughed as she threw back the little scarlet cloud that had been blown over her head.

"Indeed, I have been out! It's just glorious! Why, I have been gone an hour. Didn't you miss me?"

How pretty, how piquant she was. It was little wonder Duval's heart was full of proud joy. Even Mr. Hazleton imbibed the charm of her presence.

"Nobody once thought of you, madcap. It isn't of the least consequence, if you haven't caught cold, and enjoyed the storm."

Cecile turned a flushed, eager face toward him; and John Duval wondered if the exhilaration of the air had lent such brilliant excitement to her eyes.

"Enjoyed myself! It is the happiest night of my life!"

He just glanced at her bewitching face, and just caught a glimpse of the effect of her own words; then, with a graceful little gesture of her sunny head, averted her face.

"You two proxy gentlemen are welcome to your fire and grave discussion of stocks. I sha'n't

disturb you, I think—for awhile. Where's Nell, papa? In the dining-room. John—take care of papa till I come back!"

She threw him a kiss—her face all alight with such wondrously beautiful excitement, and went out into the hall, her skirts rustling as they trailed over the carpeting, her feet pattering swiftly as she ascended the stairs.

Half an hour afterward, Mrs. Hazleton came swiftly into the room, holding a slip of paper in her hand; her face white as the snow outside, a great, speechless agony in her eyes.

Mr. Hazleton sprang to his feet in alarm. John Duval, with a sharp anguish of fear on his face, waited, as if for the confirmation of some terribly-vague, suddenly-born suspicion.

The mother dropped the notelet from her trembling fingers into her husband's outstretched hand.

"Read it; can it be true!—convince me it is not true!"

Mr. Hazleton read the four lines aloud, in a voice that from alarm and great astonishment grew to stern relentlessness.

"Mamma, dear mamma," it said, in Cecile's unmistakable handwriting—"don't let papa and dear old John be angry with me; I know you will not be when you know I have gone with Fred—we were married at the parsonage an hour ago. I love him, and he loves me better than all the world."

And that was one New Year eve.

Year after year had added its softening memories to the past, until seven New Year's days had come and gone, and 1875, with its clear skies and crisp frosty air had come right royally in, laden with its cheer and welcome to thousands of happy, hopeful hearts.

But, for all the flowing wishes, the garlanding evergreens, the branching holly, the mirth and joyousness, the glad wishes and ardent benisons, there were aching hearts on the bright sunny Friday, January 1st, 1875; and no heart ached more dully, or less constantly, than John Duval's—proud, stern, reticent man that he was, and doubly so since the night, seven years ago, when Cecile Hazleton had dashed the cup, already brimming, from his lips. That had been a frightful blow to him—one that, at the first, completely prostrated him, one that laid him on his back, in a low fever of raging delirium for weeks. Then, when he recovered, a mere shadow of his former self, a quiet, patient, enduring, yet hopeless man, he knew Cecile had hit harder than she meant to.

At first, he could not forgive her. Hard thoughts at her daring duplicity, that made him the dupe, at her cruel deception, at her heartless indifference, raged against her. Then, as the years went on, and he never saw her, or heard

figure, so slight, so graceful, so full of nervous enthusiasm. Then he smiled sadly.

"I think not your Cecile, boy. She is twenty-two or three years old, and you—"

"I am just twenty-two—I know I look younger."

"Yes, you do—and, you have a Cecile, too?"

A moment's silence, then he began to speak in a low, eager tone, that grew furious as he went on.

"You have a Cecile—you—a Cecile, you, a beardless boy! You dare look forward to happiness with a woman who bears the name she— but say, boy, what Cecile do you love? Tell me her name!" he demanded, hotly.

A quick averting of the face, a perceptible shivering of the figure, and then a low, half reluctant answer, as if the man's violence alone commanded it.

"Cecile—Cecile Gasten."

It was almost whispered, but Duval heard it, and staggered back to his chair.

"My God!—Cecile Gasten—and you know her—love her—"

The lad's voice interrupted him.

"Did I say I loved her? Do you love her? Tell me you do, and—"

Duval laughed. Was this boy taunting him, daring him?

"Do I love her—the woman who deserted me on my marriage eve, seven years ago to-night? Do I love her—fair, false, fickle? Do I love her, the only woman I ever kissed in my life, who has wrecked my life, and made me a ghost among the shadows of the past, out of which I can never escape?—Yes, I love her."

He looked at the boy almost sneeringly, in his own great, grand superiority, and then suddenly grew mute, paralyzed with astonishment, to see him rush across the space between them and fall sobbing at his feet, clasping his knees with his clinging arms.

"John!—John! don't you know me? Oh, forgive me!—forgive me that I have dared to do this—that I have ventured to be near you—the only man I ever loved! Can you forgive me, John—will you?"

The wrig fell off, and Cecile's golden hair streamed over her shoulders, as he had seen it so often.

"Cecile!" He said the word, gaspingly, wonderingly, with a great fear, a great doubt, a great bliss struggling in his face.

"It is I—when I wash off the dye you will see—but, John!—John!—tell me you will forgive me—I am a widow, for five weary years—and I want you to say what you said a moment ago. I know I wrecked your life, but can I not make amends? John, may I?"

And just as the midnight bells rung in the glad New Year, Cecile's new life began.

On other occasions he was practicing at circus performances, gazing with deep wonder into shop windows, or otherwise disposing of his valuable time.

His companions were surprised at Pete's impetuous manner of breaking up their games, and sending him down for a pint of ale. He'll step round himself and square off the reckoning with you. So he says."

"Tell Johnny Logan that we're doing a cash business now," the inn-keeper would reply.

"And get out that door, sudden," would be a full one; that's logic," was Pete's rejoinder.

"Think it wouldn't be hard to carry you, for you're the emptiest beat I ever did see."

Such remarks were usually followed by a hasty business call for Pete in the street.

His next demand might be in some business concern.

"Any work to-day for a poor boy, mister?"

"What sort of work are you used to?"

"Kin do most any thing. Jist say what you want me fer, and you kin bet I'm good at it."

"We want you to-day for nothing."

"You've hit it there, mister. That's jist what I've been bung up to. I tell you I'm a coon at doin' nothin'."

And so he would keep it up, spreading his impudence indiscriminately, until fortune brought him again within view of Colonel Green.

The associates of the colored were also objects of great interest to him. Not one of the more familiar of these but what Pete honored with a share of his special attention.

But among them he saw no one reminding him of the person with whom he had heard Colonel Green speak of Minnie Ellis.

One day he thought he had a glimpse of this individual, passing the colonel in the street, with a seeming gesture of recognition. But, as before, he saw only his back, and soon lost sight of it.

All this was very discouraging to the boy. There was nothing to show that Colonel Green had any deeper interest at stake than the needs of eating and sleeping at his boarding-house, of

Got my left eye on you, kurnel. When I take aim with the left eye it never misses. Think I'll jist take a quiet walk through the woods. Hope you ain't got no objections, kurnel. You and me ain't never been interduced, or I might jine you."

The wood soon ended in an open, farming country. The colonel here took a narrow lane, which led him through a range of farms, and into another piece of woodland, some two miles forward.

Pete had plodded along in his rear, managing to avoid the suspicious glances which the colonel cast back, or to appear as a rustic farm-hand, without a thought above turnips.

Once in the woods again, concealment was easier.

On leaving this strip of woodland Colonel Green emerged upon the bank of the river, at a wild-looking place.

It was a small clearing, which had been abandoned, while a thick growth of bushes had replaced the felled trees, some of whose trunks were yet visible in the long grass.

The line of woods stretched around it and touched the river-bank beyond.

Near the river lay the deserted cabin of the settler, a two-story log hut. The upper story seemed to have been added more recently, and was built of roughly-planned boards.

Decay appeared to have seized upon the original log structure, and the whole affair had a rickety aspect.

Pete hung back in the shadow of a huge oak while the colonel walked rapidly across the intervening space and disappeared within the door of the hut.

The boy remained for some time in his hiding-place, not thinking it advisable to show himself too soon, and indulging in one of his customary soliloquies.

"Fred, Kurnel Green; if you ain't, Pica-yune Pete don't know beans. I'm fur you, boss. You've got the gal in that shaft, and I'm jist the feller to bring her out of there, or blow up. Look out, kurnel, Pete's a-coming. Keep your left eye skinned, my military friend, or you're sold."

The low bushes surrounding the hut fully protected Pete's advance. He crept forward with the utmost caution, avoiding any noise, and was some twenty minutes in reaching the hut.

He had approached it from the rear. The old, moss-grown and decayed logs rose upright before him, partly covered by climbing vines.

There was no opening in the lower story, but a small window appeared in the side of the upper story just above him.

After reconnoitering the house to see that there was no one on the look-out, Pete returned to the rear.

The river ran here close by him, with a small sail-boat tied to the bank. The place seemed to have been used as a sort of fishing-station.

Without further hesitation Pete grasped the vines and the projections of the logs, and began cautiously to ascend.

With his agility and practice in gymnastic sports it was child's play to him, and in a minute or two he had grasped the sill of the window, and swung himself up so that his eyes commanded a view of the interior.

A small room was visible before him, an open door leading into a passage beyond, while a second closed door seemed to lead to a second apartment.

While he looked, this door opened and the form of Colonel Green appeared. The boy ducked his head quickly down, but not too soon to catch a glimpse of another form in the room beyond.

It was five minutes before he ventured to look again. The room was empty.

Cautiously raising the sash Pete slipped noiselessly through the open space, and stood within the room.

Before him was the passage, to his left a bolted door.

CHAPTER VIII.

A CAGED BIRD.

We must return to Minnie Ellis, the mystery of whose disappearance yet remains unrevealed.

After leaving her school-companion, whom she had desired to go to the wood with her in search of spring flowers, she had concluded to go by herself.

It wanted yet two hours of supper-time; her cousin had not met her on her way home, as he had been in the habit of doing, and there was no good reason why she should not yield to her inclination.

It was about half a mile to the edge of the woodland, partly through sparsely-built streets, partly by a country lane.

The happy child passed rapidly over this distance, swinging her school-bag lightly in her hand, while the mild air played with her golden ringlets.

It was a charming spring afternoon. The whole landscape lay bathed in the rays of a genial sun. The sides of the lane were full of the beauty of greenward and modest flowers.

Bustling bees and gay-winged butterflies flitted from blossom to blossom. Birds sped from tree to tree, or greeted her from the roadside hedge with their sweetest songs.

Minnie hastened on delighted. Love of Nature was implanted deep in her soul, and there was a poetic fervor in her imagination that lent a double charm to scenes like this.

Within the woods the aspects of Nature changed, but were not less delightful to her. Every patch of sunlight that broke through the leaves and danced upon the cool floor was a delight to her young soul. Every blue violet, every white berry-blossom was eagerly plucked. Step by step, in search of floral treasures, she sunk deeper into the woods.

The thoughtless child had failed to notice that a person had followed her, and was now in the wood close behind her.

It was not until he spoke that she became aware of the fact that she was not alone.

"Are you so fond of flowers?" spoke a voice behind her.

Minnie turned, half-alarmed, to see a well-built and well-dressed gentleman standing near her and smiling at her hasty movement.

She recognized him as a person she had often seen in town. Her alarm passed away on seeing a familiar face.

"I am very fond of them," she answered.

"But those are poor ones you have. I think I could easily find prettier."

"Oh, can you?" and her childish enthusiasm broke out. "But that would be too much trouble for you. Please tell me where I may find them."

"It will be no trouble. I was going further into the wood. There is plenty of wild honey-suckle there, and other handsome flowers."

"Why I thought I had been through the whole wood," but I know I never found any honey-suckle," she walked on contentedly by his side. "Is it far?"

"Just past that clump of big trees." The trees were reached and passed, but the promised flowers failed to appear.

She looked at him in surprise.

"I must have been mistaken," he said. "It was in some other part of the wood I saw the flowers."

"I won't trouble you, then, to show me," she said, "and I am ever so much obliged. I think I must be going home now."

"There is a tree of fine dogwood blossoms," he replied. "I can get you some of those."

Without waiting for a reply, he proceeded to gather some of the white flowers, leading her still deeper into the wood.

The child, in the delight of her acquisitions, forgot how late it was getting, or how far from home she was.

"Oh, dear!" she suddenly cried out, as they emerged upon the further border of the wood, "see how low the sun is. It must be supper time, and I am ever so far from home."

"Don't let that worry you any child," he answered. "I have a carriage close by here, and will take you home."

"No, indeed! I could not put you to all that trouble."



"I am not Susie! I am not your niece! I want to go home! I will go home!"

Nobody's Boy:

OR,

THE STOLEN CHILD.

BY CHARLES MORRIS.

CHAPTER VII.

PETE GOES A-FISHING AND HOLDS A SHARK.

It proved no little task which Pete had set himself. Colonel Green's first movement was to his home in the city. This was a half-hotel, half-boarding-house, in which it was evident that Minnie Ellis could not be concealed.

His next move was to a tavern which he was much in the habit of frequenting, a drinking establishment of no great odor of respectability in the city.

From this he proceeded to a mansion of more mysterious purpose, but of whose uses the ubiquitous boy was well aware.

It was a gambling establishment, in which the secrets of faro, poker, and roulette, were nightly taught to all who were willing to pay for their knowledge.

Working for a dead horse to-day," was Pete's growing comment. "Dunno what to make of the chap, any how. Looks as if he'd nothing in hand but eatin', drinkin', and gamblin', 'cept it's making speeches. He lets himself out some at speechifying, but I've a notion it was all playing possum. Got anything to say on that subject, Nicodemus?"

The dog answered by a series of discordant barks.

"Jist so, Nick. Jist what I think, too. You're a clear-headed dog; if you ain't, I'll cave. If I only understood dog-talk a bit better now. No matter, Nicodemus; we've put in our day's work; let's go home and interview old Meg for supper. How's that, doggy?"

The cur gave his usual bark, on hearing his name spoken.

"That's so, Nick," continued Pete. "Pity but some more I know of had your brains. You mean you'll git more kicks than bones, and I'll git more tongue than beefsteak. Let her wag, Nick, we're seasoned oak, we kin stand it."

He was not far wrong in his anticipations. Old Meg was exasperated by his long absence and empty pockets, and gave him a very plain piece of her mind. But Pete had heard her eloquence before, and bore it like a hero.

This day was a copy of the two or three succeeding. Pete's business affairs were sadly neglected. He had nobler work on hand, and denied himself to Colonel Green's way with a persistence that must have attracted that person's attention, only for the boy's shrewd mode of conducting the investigation.

Now he would be diligently playing marbles with some of the boys, in the front of the house of the colored. Now he would be teaching Nicodemus some new trick. Again, the mysteries of kite-flying or ball-playing would engage his at-

timbing at the taverns, or of gambling at the saloons.

His few days' absence might have been on an innocent business call. He had certainly spoken strongly in favor of energetic action, at the meeting, and the people looked on him as one favoring and counseling the most inflexible pursuit of the abductor.

But Pete was cross-grained, and did not readily take to new views.

"All sound, kurnel," he said to himself, "but I'm not sellin' out at half price. You're sailin' smooth, these days, that I'll gin in; but I've a notion there's rough water ahead. Can't git over that 'Minnie Ellis.' That sticks half-way down, kurnel. Ain't easy swallowed. Reckon I'll gin you my valuable attention a day or two longer."

The day or two more passed and then there was an explosion.

Old Meg—a cross, sour, profane, dried-up housekeeper—gave Pete a very considerable slice of her mind.

"I ain't keepin' a boardin'-house for the likes of you, you young imp," was her mild remark. "You haven't brought the vally of a cent into the house these two weeks. Do you think, maybe, I'm goin' to fret my life and soul out, and scrub my hands out and bother my wits out fer such a dirty vagabond as you? I'll give you a taste of the broomstick that you'll not forget soon if— And what are you at now, for all the world?"

"Goin' a-fishin', Meg. Want to shet up your mouth with a big catfish."

"You best be lookin' for a job and trying to 'arn a decent livin', instead of wastin' your time over catfish. And you'll not bring a scale home, I know it."

"Cats don't have no scales, Meg," cried out Pete, laughing, as he made his way out of hearing of her eloquent remarks.

Pete's fishing-place that day lay down the river, several miles from the place where the reader has already seen him making havoc among the trees.

He had his usual good luck, and soon landed a respectable string of fish.

He had just strung these on a pliable twig, and deposited them in a pool of water, for the purpose of keeping them in condition, when his attention was drawn to the figure of a man passing through the woods that bordered this part of the river.

He was some distance away, and half-hidden by the trees, but there was something very familiar to Pete in the gray, cut-away coat, and the general figure and height of the man.

With the utmost haste the boy disposed of his fishing-tackle in a safe place, and started rapidly on the track of the person he had seen.

He soon brought him within view again, and followed now more cautiously, taking care to keep the tree-trunks between himself and the man in advance.

"Don't think you'd recognize me, kurnel," he said to himself, "and calculate I won't push myself on you. Might be awkward, you know."

"But I am going back to town, and it will be no trouble."

"You are sure it will be no trouble?" she asked.

"Not the least. Are you not fond of riding?"

"Oh, ever so fond! But I am afraid my aunt might not approve of my riding with a strange gentleman; I am sure madame would not."

"Madame? Who is madame?"

"Why, our teacher. At the Young Ladies' Select School, you know."

"Yes, yes, I know madame well. She would have no objection to my driving you home. I know your aunt also. Here is my carriage. Shall I help you in?"

They had now emerged up in the country lane that ran here by the side of the wood.

A partly-closed carriage, drawn by one horse, stood near them—the animal tied to a roadside tree.

It did not strike Minnie as strange that her new friend should have a carriage waiting for him in this out-of-the-way place. She was not aware that he had followed her on foot from the city.

She stood irresolute—half wishing for the offered ride, half dreading some blame for her impudence.

He untied the horse, and led it to the middle of the road.

"Now, my dear, allow me," he said. Ere she had realized it, he had gently lifted her, and deposited her in the carriage.

An instant he was beside her, and had started the horse down the road.

She felt rather pleased to be thus forced, as it were, to do as her wishes counseled. She was tired, and the walk home would have been a long one.

Minnie failed to see a figure that stood in the woods at a short distance, looking with sardonic pleasure at this incident. It was the figure of the person who had provided the carriage, and left it in this lonely situation.

"Are you not driving in the wrong direction?" she asked, laying her small hand upon his arm.

"No; the road winds below here. You will be home in twenty minutes."

"I am afraid I will be wondering what keeps me. It is past supper-time now."

"It is not six yet," he replied. "See, is not that beautiful?"

He pointed to where the sunlight struck upon a long reach of water before them, painting the ripple with a golden luster.

"Oh, charming!" she cried. "And see yonder! that vessel! How prettily it stands out. You can see every rope against the sky. Don't they have a wonderful number of masts, and ropes, and sails aboard a vessel?"

"About some vessels they certainly do."

"But see, you are surely going wrong. There is the city behind us."

"I am not going wrong, my child. You will soon see that."

They passed several houses built by the roadside, and entered upon a more lonely reach of road.

Soon the carriage drove past a piece of woodland that seemed to stretch to the water's edge.

"Now you are going wrong," she said, in a frightened tone. "You have taken the wrong road, sir, I am sure. Aunt will be so worried about me."

"I believe I am wrong; that's a fact," he said, doubtfully. "I will drive down this way. I think I see a house through the trees there, where I can inquire."

He turned the horse into a narrow track through the woods, the trees on each side early grazing the carriage, while a misty evening glimmer lay beneath the leafy arches.

Minnie looked eagerly and anxiously forward for the house he had spoken of. Her clear vision could detect nothing of the kind.

"Hark! you better turn back, sir," asked the frightened child. "There is no house here, and it is growing ever so dismal."

"Yes, there it is now; I was sure I saw one."

They emerged into a small open space, with the river in the background, and a small log house in the center.

"Let me lift you out now, my child. I think we can find our way here."

"I would rather stay here, if you please," she said, falteringly.

"No, no, you must be tired of the carriage."

He lifted her like a feather in his strong arms, and deposited her upon the ground.

Letting the horse stand, he grasped her hand and led her toward the hut.

Minnie held back, not yet quite sure whether she should distrust this new acquaintance. But, heedless of her hesitation, he drew her rapidly forward, and in a minute they had entered the hut.

They were in a sparsely-furnished room, in whose midst sat and rocked an ill-favored old woman.

"Mrs. Jones," he said, drawing the child toward her. "I have brought you my niece, Susie Thompson, as I promised. I wish you to take the best of care of her."

Minnie drew her hand out of his grasp, and stood looking at him with wide, fearful eyes.

"Very glad to see her," said the old woman, in a rasping voice. "Guess she and me will get along nice together."

"Why, what do you mean?" cried the child.

"Oh, sir, take me home! I must go home!"

"You are home, my dear. Mrs. Jones and you will keep house together for the present."

Minnie looked from one to the other, half-stupefied with surprise. Then she turned, with a quick movement, and darted to the door.

But her captor was too quick for her. He caught her before she could reach the door, and drew her forcibly back.

"What did I tell you, Mrs. Jones?" he said.

Minnie struggled violently to escape.

"Let me go!" she cried, in angry tones. "I must go home! I will go home! It was too bad of you, wicked man, to bring me here."

"Now, Susie, my dear niece, I am sorry to see you act so, and behave like Mrs. Jones."

"I am not Susie! I am not your niece!" screamed the child, in hysterical anger. "I want to go home! I will go home!"

"You see how it is, Mrs. Jones," he said. "She needs correction."

"That is so, Mr. Thompson," spoke the cracked voice of the old woman. "Leave her with me. I'll bring her to."

"I fear she will be too much for you. I will have to lock her in her own room until she learns to behave better."

He picked up the struggling child in his arms and carried her forcibly to the stairs.

"Oh, sir! don't, don't!" she begged, pitifully. "I will do anything, if you will only let me go home. I am sorry, indeed I am, that I spoke to you so."

He made no answer, but bore her on up the stairs and to the door of a room in the second story. This he opened and would have placed her on a chair inside, but she clung to him, tears streaming from her eyes.

"Oh, don't leave me with that dreadful old woman! Oh, won't you take me home?"

He disengaged her hands, and hastened to the door. She heard the grating of a bolt behind him. He was gone.

Minnie threw herself on the floor in a paroxysm of grief and fear, sobbing and moaning as if her little heart would break.

The old woman brought her up some supper, left it on the table, and went away unnoticed by her.

It was a dreadful night which the child passed. She was naturally passionate, and broke into ecstasies of anger, beating against the door, and screaming at the top of her voice. These fits were succeeded by spells of weeping, and shuddering dread.

Finally exhausted nature found its antidote in sleep—a slumber visited by unpleasant dreams—a fitful, unrefreshing sleep.

The next day passed, and the next, and the next, and Minnie continued a close prisoner. Her fits of rage did not return—grief and dread alone possessed her.

Mrs. Jones visited her at meal-times, bringing her food. The old woman usually sought to enter into conversation with her, persistently call-

ing her by the name of Susie. In vain she declared that her name was Minnie Ellis, that she lived in Toledo, and begged piteously to be set free. Mrs. Jones was not to be moved by any such appeals.

Days—months, it seemed to her—of this sad life in the wild cry prison grew more and more dreadful to her. Her dislike of her captors grew into a feeling of hatred.

At length one day the opening door revealed, not the expected form of Mrs. Jones, but the man who had taken her away from her home.

She sprang forward eagerly.

"Oh, sir, you are come to take me home!"

"Not yet, my dear niece. I hope in a few days to take you to your right home, not to Toledo."

"I am not your niece, and my home is Toledo!" she cried, with tears in her eyes.

"Now, Susie, if you would only quit talking such nonsense. You will never get out of here while you keep such foolish fancies in your head."

"I am not your niece! My name isn't Susie! You are a bad man, a wicked man! Oh, what did I ever do to you? Oh, sir, do take me home!"

"Will, Susie, when you come to your senses. I only wish you to forget all the nonsense you have been talking, and remember that you are my niece, Susie Thompson."

"I ain't! I ain't! I ain't!" she screamed, in sudden fury. "I would pull my tongue out before I said so. I will never, never, never say so! never, if I die here!"

"Very well, my dear niece, we shall see."

He retired, bolting the door behind him.

She flung herself on her bed, weeping from a revulsion of feeling. A short time passed, when she heard the bolt again cautiously drawn, and saw the door slowly open.

Looking languidly up, she saw the form of Petyan Pete standing just within the room.

"With your eyes look upon me, and delight in the spring up, flew across the room, and clasped the ragged boy firmly within her arms.

"Oh, Pete!" she said, "take me from this dreadful place!"

"Hush! hush! Minnie," he said. "That man will hear you; that blasted kernal, that I'm agoin' fur."

"I am so glad to see you," she said, in lower tones. "How did you get here?"

"Snaked it," said Pete. "I just clumb up like a cat."

A quick, stern step was heard in the passage beyond.

"He is coming back!" said Minnie, frightened.

"Let go of me," said Pete, in resolute, fierce tones.

She unclasped her arms and set the boy free.

"So, this is fine," said a satirical voice in the doorway. "My bird has found a mate. I will have two in the cage instead of one."

There was a devilish look upon his face as he pushed the door quickly to.

At that perilous moment Pete's gymnastic exercise stood him in good stead. With the agile leap of a wild-cat he sprang against the half-closed door, hurling it wide open, and almost prostrating Colonel Green, who was seeking to close it.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 355.)

BARBARA.

Barbara sits in her porch so green.
All day long till the sun goes down;
She hears the buzz of her sewing-machine,
She hears the hum of the distant town.
And sometimes the drone of the hive she hears,
Or the tick-tack murmur the mill-wheel makes;
But at every step at the garden gate
A pause she makes and a tear she breaks;

And sadly saying, "He comes not, then?"
She sighs and turns to her sewing again.
Summer winds can ye bring him back?
To a weary bosom that knows no calm?

Summer and winter, and early and late,
Doth little Barbara sit and hark
For that one swift step at the garden gate
That never comes and that never will hark.

I wonder, if she but the truth could know
That is kept from so many anxious souls—
That her lover's head had been long laid low
Where the grassy sea of the prairie rolls.

How long would it be ere window and door
Would be empty both, and her wailing o'er?
Oh, winds, west winds, will ye not tell
What long ago in your wilds befell?

Nay, leave her be; let her knit and sew,
And linger and listen, and watch and wait.
In its own good time there will come, I know,
A message for her from the grave below.

A whisper will breathe in the anxious ears,
Her wasted figure a soft arm fold,
And the love and trust that years ago
Will bring her forward in a blissful old.

Though watching and waiting consumes our prime,
There are angels in heaven that bide their time.
Ye winds, blow lightly! still let repose
The happy ignorance Barbara knows.

SURE-SHOT SETH, The Boy Rifleman;

ON
THE YOUNG PATRIOTS OF THE NORTH.

BY OLL COOMES,
AUTHOR OF "IDAHO TOM," "RED ROB," "DAKOTA DAN," "OLD DAN BACKBAC," ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DISGUISED CAPTOR.

MAGGIE was thrown almost prostrate by the sudden lurch of the boat, and before she could recover herself, she found that she was in the power of a savage, who, in plain English, said:

"Not a word, or I'll smother you."

Filled with amazement and unconscious in the wet bottom of the boat, while her captor took up the paddle and kept the craft moving out further and further from the island. The maiden knew not what had been the fate of her brave young companion. She could hear the sounds of struggle somewhere, and supposed that he proceeded from the island. She breathed a prayer for Seth's triumph, yet she felt there was little hope for him, boy that he was, contending with two powerful savages. In the midst of her devout supplications, a strange medley of cries rose upon the night, and was followed by a savage yell, the crash of firearms, and the shouts of combatants.

The savage ceased paddling, as if paralyzed by the sound; and, for a moment, he seemed undecided as to the course he should pursue. He dipped the paddle, turned and whirled the craft in one direction, then in another.

Maggie could now see his motions, for the moon had sailed up above the eastern forest and flooded the lake with a shaven of mellow light. She saw, also, that he was dressed in the garb of a chief, and was the same individual that she and Seth had seen that day pacing along the margin of the lake.

In a moment the chief regained his composure, and, with a fickleless unbecoming chief, he soon changed his mind again, and turned in to a little island, and landed. He assisted Maggie from the boat, and, conducting her to the interior of the island, spread his blanket upon the ground for her to be seated. Tired and weary in both body and mind, the maiden availed herself of his proffered kindness; and when asked, she lifted the edges of the blanket and wrapped them about her shoulders.

"Let the white maiden rest easy, for no harm shall come to her now," the young chief said, in good English.

Maggie started at the sound of his voice, for it struck her as being familiar. She endeavored to recall the faces of the Indians she had known and heard during the days of peace; but among the many that had frequented the Agency, she could remember no voice to which the voice belonged. Recovering her power of speech she answered:

"Why, then, have I been taken from my people?"

"Why does the maiden pluck the rose from the parent stem?" was his answer.

Maggie made no answer.

"It is because she loves the flower," the chief answered, "and that is why I have taken the white rose of the pale-faces."

"You were not with my captors last night," she answered.

"My warriors were," he answered. "Long has Hawk-Eyes loved the white maiden, and wanted her for a wife. He has spared her life that she might brighten up his lodge with the light of her face."

"Then you may as well kill me here, for I will never be your wife," answered Maggie, indignantly.

"Let my white rose remember that her people are all dead, and that Hawk-Eyes is her best friend, now."

"Hawk-Eyes tells a falsehood!" reiterated the maiden, scornfully. "I hate him for it. My friends are not all dead!"

"Ugh! the white rose has thorns that are concealed," the chief answered, sarcastically, for her retort cut sharply into his cowardly spirit; "but they are harmless," he added, mockingly. "A brave girl would not be so feeble, yet she is less girl. He dare not face the friend I left on the island and speak thus to me."

"Hawk-Eyes fears not the dead," was the savage's reply, that fairly crushed the maiden's heart; but she bravely repressed her emotions from her tormentor. Upon reflection she took courage. She knew her captor's assertion was made without any positive knowledge as to whether Seth had been slain or not; for they had left before the struggle had been decided between her friend and the savages.

The discharge of firearms, the shouts, yells, and strange cries that rent the night soon after their departure from the island, had died out, and a deep silence reigned. Pretty Maggie no longer could count on one island to another, endeavoring to conceal it, in every way possible, from her.

Suddenly a shout rung across the lake, that seemed to increase the chief's fears, and he at once embarked in the dugout, with his canoe, for other quarters. Some one in the canoe had heard convinced him that it was not safe to tarry longer; and what gave him uneasiness and fear, gave Maggie hope and courage.

The chief plied his paddle with extreme caution, and he kept his eyes fixed on the shore, pausing to rest and listen whenever under the shadows of an islet.

Maggie sat in front of her captor, her head bowed, and her eyes fixed on the glassy water rippling in the moonlight.

They had passed two or three islands and finally reached the one furthest south. It was covered with a number of tall pines that cast long, wide shadows upon the clear water. They were creeping through this long stretch of Sand-Island, which was but a narrow strip of land.

There was a single spot in the shadow where the moonbeams, struggling through the tree-tops, fell upon the surface, as bright as if concentrated there in a focus. In this patch of light, as they passed, came the bark of a fox, the howl of a wolf, the scream of a panther, the hoot of an owl, the cry of a night-hawk, and other sounds rose upon the night, filling the soul of Seth with joy; for in the sounds he recognized the presence of his friends, the Boy Brigade.

With a shout he leaped from the canoe, and held an upturned human face—a face white as that of a corpse and stained in spots with blood. She recognized the face; it was that of Seth Shot Seth!

CHAPTER XIV. A MYSTERIOUS CHARMER.

To return to the island where we left Sure Shot Seth engaged with a savage, is to follow up the events that have been rapidly crowding upon us.

The struggle of our hero had lasted but for a moment only, when he succeeded in getting the muzzle of his revolver against the savage's temple, and fired. This ended the hand-to-hand conflict, but scarcely had he time to realize his victory, ere he caught the dip of a number of oars and the heavy swash of a long bateau plowing its way through the water at a fearful speed.

Simultaneously with the discovery, the bark of a fox, the howl of a wolf, the scream of a panther, the hoot of an owl, the cry of a night-hawk, and other sounds rose upon the night, filling the soul of Seth with joy; for in the sounds he recognized the presence of his friends, the Boy Brigade.

With a shout he leaped from the canoe, and held an upturned human face—a face white as that of a corpse and stained in spots with blood. She recognized the face; it was that of Seth Shot Seth!

There was no telling how many fell, but, with a random discharge of their guns, the savages quickly sought shelter behind the rocks, and silence followed.

The red-skins had evidently been surprised, and were ignorant of the number that confronted them; and the result of the collision could be determined now only by stratagem and cunning.

"To hole, ye gory critters!" yelled old Joyful Jim, who had allied himself to the Brigade, and numbered himself as "one of the boys."

A defiant yell answered him.

Only a wall of rocks running across the island like a back now separated the two parties. On the Indians' side it rose perpendicular to the height of ten feet, and on our friends' side it was a little shelving and of the same height. It varied in width from ten to thirty feet.

To pass from one side to the other they would have to go around the ends of the wall, which would force them close upon the water's brink. But neither party seemed desirous of gaining the opposite side for the sake of a fight. Each concluded to act upon the defensive, being ignorant of the other's movements.

In a few words Sure Shot Seth made known the circumstances under which he and Maggie Harris had been separated a few minutes before.

Harris groaned in spirit over the hope he had been so fondly cherishing of recovering his child.

"I'm going to try and get away from here at once," said Seth, "and hunt Maggie up. I dare say her captor will wait among the islands the result of his friends' attack here; and if so, I may creep around and rescue her. She was in the power of but one savage when I last saw her."

"Creepin' tarrapans!" exclaimed Joyful Jim, "that's just about as the likelihood of your findin' that Injin and gal to-night as that is of old Inkpaduta becomin' an angel."

"I'll try it, nevertheless," answered Seth, in a whisper; "one cannot tell what he can do, nor what he cannot do, until he has tried. Mr. Harris, I will leave my gun and accoutrements with you, as I will have to swim away from here. My knife is all that I want."

"Boy," said old Jim, "I'm afraid you'll get a pellet of lead into your system. I dare say they're watchin' our side."

"Then, my friends, we must watch out for them."

"Faith, and that we will," said Teddy O'Roope.

Seth knows his friends, said Justin.

"And can trust his own ones," said Tom Grayson.

"It requires no worse assurance me of this," answered Sure Shot Seth.

The young rifleman availed himself of his weapons, and, with a fickleless unbecoming chief, he soon changed his mind again, and turned in to a little island, and landed. He assisted Maggie from the boat, and, conducting her to the interior of the island, spread his blanket upon the ground for her to be seated. Tired and weary in both body and mind, the maiden availed herself of his proffered kindness; and when asked, she lifted the edges of the blanket and wrapped them about her shoulders.

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The chief plied his paddle with extreme caution, and he kept his eyes fixed on the shore

ELEVATING INFLUENCE.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

To pass a lady on the street
And bow politely to her,
Then find that you've mistaken one,
And that you never knew her.

To see a dun come down the walk,
And dodge across the street,
So you will not disturb his mind—
And there another meet.

To spread yourself when out to dine
Like other men of note,
And then before the ladies drink
Your tea down the wrong throat.

To talk against an absent man
In language that doth serve,
And then be tenderly informed
A relative is near.

To sit down in a railroad car
By a young lady's side,
And the first thing she says to you
Is that it's occupied.

Or to an aged woman yield
Half of the seat, and find
A younger and a prettier one
Left standing up behind.

To tell your partner at the dance
That you cannot discern
A pretty face in all the throng,
And fall excepting "her'n."

To think you're going down the street
Cutting a figure quite,
When your companion is sticking up,
And back's all over white.

To try to leave the room at dark—
And, worst of human woes,
Feel all about you for the door,
And find it with your nose.

To holla at the man before
Whom you are in the habit of
And find out when he turns around
That appearance deceives.

To follow up a scandalous tale
That's going round on you,
And when at last you run it down,
Find out that it is true!

Great Captains.

BLUCHER,
MARSHAL FORWARD.

BY DR. LOUIS LEGRAND

To class Blucher with great captains is to accord him too much eminence, since, in planning campaigns or acting independently, he was not comparable even with most of Napoleon's or the Czar Alexander's marshals. He was, however, an illustrious soldier, whose name and fame were not only dear to Prussians but became world-wide celebrity. He was simply a hard fighter—a man not only insensible to personal danger but of a tenacity of will that won for him, among his soldiers, the sobriquet of Bull-dog of the Rhine, while his readiness to go into fight, and his precipitancy in march, gave him, later, among leaders, the significant title of "Marshal Forward." To Napoleon, however, he was "The Old Devil"—*le vieux diable*—and to the world he now appears as one of the most prominent personages of an era that almost swarmed with celebrated military characters.

Lebrecht Von Blucher was born Dec. 18th, 1743, at Rostock, a town lying near the shores of the Baltic, in Mecklenburg. He came of honorable family—of Grossen Rensow. His father was captain of cavalry in the forces of Hesse-Cassel. He thus came naturally to think of the army as a profession, but turned soldier much too soon for his father's plans for his son's education. He sent the lad to the island of Rugen for private tuition, but there the sight of some Swedish hussars was too much for his duty to parents or teachers, for, despite their remonstrance, he enlisted in the Swedish service as cornet, in a regiment of hussars, being but fourteen years of age.

Sweden was then in the alliance with Russia and Austria against Frederick II. of Prussia, and the "Seven Years' War" was just opening. The boy, thus in arms against his own sovereign, was taken prisoner in his very first adventure in Pomerania, by the regiment of which he afterward became the distinguished leader—the Black Hussars. Its colonel, Von Belling, pleased with the lad's spirit and frankness, induced him to enlist in his regiment, giving in exchange a Swedish officer.

Lebrecht advanced rapidly. The Black Hussars grew to be one of Frederick's most efficient corps, and fought with such splendid valor as to win laurels on every field. Its thinned ranks were filled up with chosen men and its officers were promoted from the ranks for distinguished merit. Young Blucher's undiminished courage and devotion to duty had a reward in his advancement in three years to the senior captaincy. Then occurred a vacancy by the major's death. Promotion in order indicated young Blucher for the vacancy, but with now such a merit; a young nobleman took the place. Blucher remonstrated and the whole regiment resented this innovation upon usage in the renowned corps; but this did not effect the removal of the titled officer; so the young captain sent in a request to the king to be permitted to resign, and received this characteristic answer:

"Captain Blucher has permission to quit my service, and he may go to the devil if he thinks fit."

He didn't "go to the devil," however, but retired to the duchy of Silesia, and, with a kind of fierce zeal, devoted the succeeding fifteen years of his life to tilling the soil and acquiring an estate. In this he was eminently successful.

The war went on. Frederick, alone, and with magnificent generalship, won his fight with three powers, and the world willingly conceded him the title of The Great. Prussia, devastated by armies, and almost shorn of its young men by the sacrifices of the war, began to recover her prosperity, and the captain seemed lost from sight forever in the plodding pursuit of planting and reaping, when Frederick the Great died (1786) to be succeeded by Frederick William II., his nephew.

This gay prince, who had known and admired Blucher, at once called him from his seclusion to make him major of the Black Hussars; but, not until Frederick, in 1793, proposed and effected the coalition against France, did the regiment see severe service. Then followed the irruption of the French and the battles of Orchies, Luxemburg, Frankenstein, Oppenheim, Kirchweiler, and Edelsheim. In each of these he participated, and rose, by force of his "genius for fight," to a brigade command. At the fierce battle at Leyden, (Sept. 23th, 1794), he won new laurels by the terrible vigor of his onslaught. He was made major-general of the army of observation in the lower Rhine, after peace with France, (1795). Prussia, thereafter, kept clear of the "alliances" against France, until 1806, when Frederick William III. was forced by Russia to join in a new coalition against Napoleon, whose tremendous strides in power and conquest made him the standing menace to the other powers. This coalition resulted in precipitating upon Prussia the utmost strength of the French emperor. The splendid corps of Soult, Murat, and Bernadotte, led by Napoleon in person, with Davoust in command of the right wing, invaded Prussia, by way of Saxony, and Davoust struck Blucher's corps at Auerstadt, Oct. 14, 1806, while Napoleon, with the main body, fought the bloody battle of Jena, and, by a signal victory, opened the way to Berlin, which city he proceeded to occupy and retain until 1807. Blucher, cut off from the main army under Prince Hohenlohe, which Napoleon had defeated at Jena, tried to make a junction with it, and thence to retreat northward into Pomerania. But the prince was closely pursued, and, penned up in Prenzlau, had to surrender. This compelled Blucher to "cut and run" for Mecklenburg, where a new battle-front behind the river Trave was presented. Blucher threw his corps into Lubek.

That place the French assailed with overwhelming force. Blucher was overcome and escaped, with a remnant of his troops, but was headed off and surrendered at Ratkau, (Nov. 6th, 1806), having inserted in the article of capitulation the following: "The capitulation was offered to him by the Prince of Ponto-corno, and he accepted it only from want of ammunition, provisions and forage."

Napoleon treated the sturdy cavalryman with studied politeness. The motive, uppermost in that consummate tactician's mind was to alienate the Prussian leaders and enlist them against Russia—an object only too successful with many less heroic souls than that of Blucher. He was steadfast as iron, and being soon exchanged for General Victor, he started for Strassburg, to aid the Swedes in holding that city.

The peace of Tilsit, (July 1st, 1807), so humiliating to Frederick William III., left Prussia at peace—under a French occupancy of Berlin. But Blucher was so intractable that, at Napoleon's instigation, he was dismissed from a service that brought deep chagrin to every patriotic German; and, in company with several other distinguished officers, he retired wholly from any participation in affairs, for several years was heard of no more. In the campaign against Russia, of 1812, when Prussia and Austria sustained France, he took no part. In 1813, after Napoleon's awful disaster in Russia, and the retreat from Moscow witnessed the first serious blow at his supremacy over Europe, the Prussians arose almost en masse against their conqueror, whose yoke they had worn for nearly six years. Blucher was called from his retirement. Though then seventy years of age he still was in full vigor of mind and body. Assuming command in chief of the Prussian army, with a corps of Russians, under Winzingerode, he took the field against the French, still exceedingly powerful and confident. The battle of Lutzen (May 2d, 1813), was the first of the rapid series to follow. Napoleon commanded in person, having brought in an entirely new army of 350,000 men, resolved to regain his German possessions, to regain his protectorate over Prussia and to force the Czar Alexander to a peace honorable to France, thus leaving the emperor master of Europe. Blucher was beaten back, but, as usual with him, he retreated, saving men and guns, and was in fighting order the next day. His heroism was so conspicuous that the czar bestowed on him the order of St. George. In the battle of Bautzen (May 21st), Blucher was again beaten back—not defeated; his army was intact, cheerful and steadily growing in strength by reinforcements—Napoleon's German allies coming over to the Prussians in great numbers.

Austria, neutral in this contest, now proposed an armistice. This was accepted to, but all efforts to induce Napoleon to accept the Rhine as the boundary of France failed; so, the armistice having expired (Aug. 10th), Austria joined the coalition against Napoleon. The result was a series of conflicts occurred at and around Dresden (Aug. 24th, 25th, 26th) in which the French held the advantage. But disasters only added new resources to the allies, and Napoleon, by several heavy losses, was finally driven back, and, by Blucher on the Katzbach, which threw the French backward—the beginning of their retreat from Prussia and Germany.

At Leipzig Napoleon resolved upon a desperate stand. Oct. 16th, 1813, a long and prolonged and sanguinary conflict took place. Prussia was especially distinguished. The vanquished French now retreated toward the Rhine—leaving twenty-five thousand French in Leipzig, prisoners to the allies. That retreat was a second Moscow to the French, and the emperor reached the Rhine with only about seven thousand men—all that remained of his new army of three hundred and fifty thousand.

Passing this remnant over the river, Napoleon again hastened to Paris to recruit another army. But the allies were prompt to press the advantage. Blucher as "Marshal Forward," with two Russian, two Prussian, one Hessian and one mixed corps, crossed the Rhine Jan. 1st, 1804, to march on Paris. After some severe reverses, dealt by the now desperate emperor with a skill that has no parallel in modern warfare—the old Prussian was before the French capital the last of March. On the 30th the allied army made its grand assault at Montmartre, which gave the finishing blow to Napoleon's power. On the 31st the Czar Alexander the King of Prussia, and Old Blucher rode into Paris, at the head of their army. Napoleon abdicated April 4th, and on May 4th landed in Elba—his island home which the allied powers had assigned as his sole realm.

The exiled king fled to France, and was received over to London, in June—where the old hero created immense enthusiasm among all classes of people. Blucher, now covered with honors, and made Prince of Walsdorf by his grateful sovereign, retired to his Silesian estate, only to be called to the field again when Napoleon burst his bonds and suddenly reappeared in France, in March, 1815, to resume the reins of government and bid defiance to his enemies. The allies were quickly in arms. Blucher was given chief command of the Prussian and German corps, about eighty thousand men, and started, in June, to join Wellington in the Netherlands. Napoleon, with two corps, struck him at Ligny, June 16th, and, as he supposed, a severe defeat. Old Blucher was reported as killed, at which Napoleon very naturally expressed great satisfaction, as he turned to fall upon Wellington, at Waterloo, leaving Grouchy, with thirty thousand men, to attend to the Prussians. Fatal mistake. Old Blucher had been born on the field of battle, lying under his dead horse, while six regiments of cuirassiers rode over the field where he lay. After they were gone he got up, rejoined his corps, which had simply been pressed back, left one division to "attend to Grouchy," and started after Napoleon in hot haste. How he came up at the critical moment, on the evening of the eventful day of Waterloo (June 18th), we have related in our sketch of Wellington. He administered the finishing blow, and a dreadful blow it was.

Sixteen regiments of hussars pursued all that moonlit night, and their path was literally lined with the French dead—a most awful vengeance upon the once invincible Old Guard and the legions of veterans who had made the Emperor's name so glorious. Early on the 19th the whole Prussian army was headed for Paris, and refusing every and all suggestions of armistice or arrangement, the Old Hussar entered the city in a mood so fierce that he was not easily pacified. His mercy for those who had broken oath and pledge was a court-martial and a firing platoon. He tarried in Paris several months, and thence once more sought his Silesian home—bearing the new decoration, invented expressly for him, of the Order of the Iron Cross.

Blucher lived until Sept. 19th, 1819. His last years were made very pleasant and notable with the honors shown him by every class and condition of his countrymen, and to this day no name in German history excites more pride and enthusiasm among the Saxon race.

Stories of Chivalry.

THE SILVER MASK.

BY T. C. HARRAUGH.

"FLOWERS! flowers de Italia!" cried a sweet voice, in the flower-market of Florence.

None, my little girl, said one of two handsome-dressed men whom she had addressed with her usual call.

"If not for yourselves, signores, buy a bouquet for your sweethearts," the flower-vender persisted, with a winning smile.

But the man shook his head, as he lowered a bunch of flowers which he had been admiring, as if to please the girl.

"Come on," said his companion, petulantly tugging at his cloak. "Have you seen another doll's face? Upon my sword, Guillaume, you stand here like a smitten schoolboy. We can

not afford to ogle flower girls in the public markets."

The fellow addressed as Guillaume did not reply, but darted the girl a singular look, as he pointed his comrade to draw him from the stall.

"Their faces are alike, boy," the petulant Florentine said.

"But she was so lovely."

"I can find lovelier girls in the fish markets," retorted the other, who looked like the flowers which she was selling.

Signor Tinto bit his lip, and cast a furtive glance over his shoulder at the girl, whose eye was following them.

He whirled far away to note the pallor that chased the ruddy hue from her cheeks.

Half an hour later Guillaume stood before the girl again. Her stock of flowers had dwindled to a few bunches, which had been picked over, for Florence was in the midst of a carnival, and the beautiful bouquet found a ready sale.

The Italian made several purchases that delighted the girl, and drew her into conversation.

He discovered that her name was Tinnette, and that she lived in a poor quarter of the city, where she worked the water-wheel for her daily sale of flowers.

Her youthful beauty was striking enough to captivate such a man as Guillaume. Rapha, and he did not desert the stall until he had purchased the last flower, and showered squibs into Tinnette's purse.

As he walked away, reluctantly, he did not dream of the tragic manner in which his new acquaintance was destined to end.

He sought his luxurious lodgings in the most fashionable quarter of the beautiful Italian city, and prepared for the masque which was to be given that night in honor of the carnival.

He threw the flowers upon the dressing-stand, and cast a smile upon them. Somehow or other the last flower, which clung to his thoughts, and he saw her while he robbed himself in the costume of an ancient harper.

"It will do me no good to think of her," he suddenly exclaimed. "There are hundreds of such girls in Florence. I must dismiss you, fair Tinnette. No doubt you possess a lover whose circumstances are as humble as your own. But, I could love you, girl, though I am far above you in station; yet I dare not! Guillaume Rapha possesses the family pride. He can not be the laughing-stock of Florence."

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the balcony and downward like a stricken eagle.

"Mercy, Guillaume!" gasped the vanquished mask, at whose breast the Florentine's point was thrust. "I am your friend Tinto."

"My friend? since you have robbed me of Tinnette!" was the implacable reply. "Over the balcony! I disdain to spill a drop of your blood."

Tinto standing revealed before his infuriated friend, pleaded for mercy. As well might he have prayed to the walls of the palace.

"Over! or, by the holy lights in heaven! I'll hand you over to the rack!"

The murderer gnashed his teeth and climbed over the railing. His face was white, and he still looked, but in vain, for a spark of mercy in Guillaume's eyes.

"Farewell!" said the victor. "There are rocks along the shore. If you jump far out you have a chance for life. Now jump, my friend!"

Guillaume raised his sword as he uttered the command, and with a bitter oath the murderer leaped out into the air.

Down, down he went, till the night lost him to the victor's sight, and the faint echo of a splash came up from below.

Guillaume, the Florentine, turned away and sought the lighted rooms. But he did not tarry there. His figure was soon missed, and his carriage bore him back to his lodgings.

A trio of fishermen drew a body from the water on the following morning. At first they called it a little page; but when one raised the silver mask that, saturated with water, clung to the face like a shroud, a general exclamation rent the air:

"Tinnette, the flower-girl!"

The poor men bore her body home while another party, belonging to their class, stood over the handsomely-dressed figure of the villain Tinto.

Among the many people who flocked to see it as it lay exposed for a time by the authorities was one who, after viewing it for a moment, murmured, as he turned away:

"He didn't jump far enough from the balcony!"

The two deaths puzzled the authorities, and the annual pension which Tinnette's mother received to the day of her death never revealed the name of its donor.

At last the old woman died, and the hands that raised the weapon and the hand which had avenged the death of her daughter.

Florence at last seemed to find a clue to the tragedy of the *bal masque* when over the heart of a nobleman, killed in a duel, was discovered the silver mask. But the clue proved to be a will-o'-the-wisp, for the bloody life of Guillaume Rapha would not solve the mystery.

Returning hastily to camp, we sent Uncle Lige down with his cart to bring in our game, and until bedtime that night we were occupied in dressing and packing our venison.

We sought our respective places of repose about ten o'clock. When we retired, the air was dry and rather sharp. A strong wind was sweeping up from the south and roaring through the reeds on either side of us like the rush of a distant storm.

Uncle Lige stood guard; we could not induce him to give way to any of us.

"I don't like these dry winds," he said; "they're dangerous here on this open prairie. No, no, boys! I'll keep watch to-night."

Wondering what he could be so afraid of, we went to sleep; and I rather thought that Uncle Lige must have fallen into a dose also, for along in the night we were aroused by a startled cry—a cry like that of one started suddenly from his sleep with terror:

"Good Lord in heaven, boys! Git out, quick! the Hell and Purgatory's afore from center to conference, and there's no escape for us!"

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announced that we had reached the outskirts of the deer-range, and so we halted and again went into camp on the open prairie, with the rather startling assurance that we were now between the Hell and Purgatory.

We were now compelled to use considerable economy in fuel, as we were a long way from timber, but with a meager supply in our wagon. Provender for our animals was also scarce, but we overcame want by picking out our horses out where they could crop the dry prairie grass, which, even after the heaviest autumnal frosts, retains some nutriment.

After we had partaken of a late dinner, we all shouldered our guns and set off on the hunt of deer, going in pairs. Jim and I made our way eastward until we reached the margin of the deer slough, when we stopped to contemplate the scene and review our past record.

The marsh, or slough, was over a mile wide, and overgrown with a dense body of black reeds. The water in it was deep and dark, and full of croaking frogs. A slight wind was blowing from the south, and creeping among the dense reeds with a pent-up roar.

Being soon satisfied with our deliberation over the swamp, we turned our faces south and continued on. We had gone but a short way, when, to our joyful surprise, we discovered four deer coming across from the Purgatory directly toward us, having doubtless been routed by Bob and George.

We dropped ourselves in the grass and looked to our guns, which were heavily charged with buck-shot. The wind being across their course, we had no fears of the animals detecting our presence, and when they were within forty paces of us we rose to our feet. They turned abruptly aside at sight of us, when each one poured a double charge into his deer.

One of the animals fell dead in its tracks—the other made a few desperate leaps forward, reeled and fell. Jim hastened forward with drawn knife to curb their throats. He thus served one of them, and was approaching the second—a large buck—when the animal staggered to its feet and made a lunge at him, striking with its hoofs with all the vicious desperation of its power. Jim sprang back and eluded the full force of the blow,